## GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



## Thomas Circle Restoration Project A Joint Project of the District Department of Transportation (DDOT), National Park Service (NPS) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

Construction Start Date: January 3, 2005

Scheduled Construction Completion Date: January 2, 2006

Contact Information: Karyn Le Blanc, 202-298-2823, Karyn.LeBlanc@dc.gov

Contractor & Cost: Civil Construction, \$5.6 million

- DDOT, Utility and Road Improvement Project.
  - o Road closures and traffic detours will be apparent during the various stages of construction. Drivers are cautioned to be aware of traffic pattern changes and detour signs.
  - Curbside parking will be restricted in various areas throughout the project according to traffic and work requirements. Parking restriction signs will be posted and enforced as necessary.
  - O Construction work hours are 7:00am to 7:00pm, Monday thru Friday. (Saturday work may be conducted when necessary

Thomas Circle is an historic landmark in the old city of Washington, D.C. One of the original elements of the L'Enfant Plan, it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Circles formed a defense perimeter for the area north of the White House and were placed strategically throughout the city. At the heart of the circle is a statue of General George Henry Thomas, a brilliant commander and administrator in the Civil War. The statue is considered by some to be the finest equestrian statue in the city. It was funded by the Society of the Army of the Cumberland, which Thomas (1816-1870) commanded upon his promotion to brigadier general.

Thomas Circle is located at a major city hub where 14<sup>th</sup> Street, Vermont Avenue, M Street and Massachusetts Avenue converge and a key feature of the Logan Circle Historic District. As the demand from vehicular traffic grew, major traffic congestion became a serious problem. In the early 1950s, the District altered the geometrics of the Circle in an effort to ease traffic gridlock. A grade separation was constructed to permit Massachusetts Avenue to pass under the Circle and 14<sup>th</sup> Street cut through the Circle in

the north-south direction creating two crescent shaped parcels, as shown in the following images.



Thomas Circle, circa 1888



Thomas Circle, circa 1915



Thomas Circle, circa 2000



Thomas Circle, rendering 2006 completion

With the planned reconfiguration of the roadways surrounding Thomas Circle, the District, in cooperation and support with the National Park Service, Federal Highway Administration and the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), decided to restore the Circle incorporating the original L'Enfant vision. "We strongly support and endorse the proposal to restore the circle to its original appearance, as conceived in the original Pierre L'Enfant plan, and feel it would reinforce the historic character of the surrounding area." (Letter from Historic Preservation Office to DDOT May 16, 2002).

The final design includes directing all vehicular traffic to the perimeter of the Circle, thereby eliminating the cut-through lanes. The consolidation allows for a large and more functional landscaped area. Continuing with the District Department of Transportation's desire to incorporate more modes of transportation with smart-growth features in future transportation designs. The new configuration will include bicycle lanes and, for the first time, pedestrian access to the center of the Circle and the General Thomas' statue.

Thomas Circle is surrounded by unique and vibrant residential neighborhoods. Wit this focus on inter-modal and smart-growth design, Thomas Circle and the surrounding

Logan Circle community will be able to realize its full potential as a interactive and bustling community. The restoration and redesign of Thomas Circle will act as a catalyst completing one more essential element in the revitalization of this historic district.